

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes - Final
May 19,2016

Present: Christine Carney (Chair), Sheri Baron, Mel Goldsipe, Sharon Grossman, Wendy Bell, Bill Logan, Nick Minton, Marlissa Briggett, Chris Huvos, Gary Horowitz, Ghanda Di Figlia

Absent: Jorge Loayza, Yawa Degboe

Guest: Susan P. McHugh

April Minutes: Commissioner Baron moved to accept the April 2016 minutes with corrections, Commissioner DiFiglia seconded the motion. The vote was in the affirmative with three commissioners abstaining.

Correspondence: None received.

Incidents and Complaints: Update on complaints recorded in April minutes:

1. Stolen Calvary Methodist Church "Black Lives Matter" sign: Commisioner Logan contacted the church. They will handle it internally. Commissioner Goldsipe will meet with members of the church about a possible survey about racial matters similar to the LGBTQIA survey.

2. Commissioner Huvos and Commisisoner Goldsipe met the Complainant and explained to them that the four month deadline for complaints to be filed had passed at the time of their filing, and that the AHRC could not take any action on this particular complaint. The compliant will remain as part of public record should a similar incident arise.

Citizens Open Forum: Sue McHugh gave a history of racist and anti-Semitic incidents in Arlington that led to the formation of the Arlington Human Rights Commission. She commented on the incidents at Ottoson which she felt were not being addressed adequately.

Commissioner Carney reviewed the responses of the Ottoson School principal and the Superintendent of Schools to the incidents. Commissioner Horowitz talked with 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from Arlington who said that they felt safe, and knew who at the school they should go to if they need guidance.

Commissioner Baron reported that the Response Coordination Team has been informed of the incidents at the Ottoson.

LGBTQIA Survey: Commissioner Goldsipe needs help analyzing data from Survey Monkey. She will contact Robin Varghese to see if he would be interested in providing that help.

Facing History and Ourselves Event at Robbins Library, May 17: The Commission thanks Commissioners Grossman and Horowitz for organizing the event. In consideration of how to proceed further, we will explore the possibility of setting up a booth at Town Day at which people could record their own human rights related stories. This would be modeled on the public radio program, Story Corps.

E-Mail Communication policy: Commissioner Goldsipe explained the policy developed for the use of the Town email address for the AHRC (ahrc@town.arlington.ma.us). The policy will be distributed to all commissioners to be voted on at a later date.

Publicity guide for advertising AHRC events: Not discussed

Subcommittee Updates: A joint sub-committee with members of the School Committee and the AHRC will be formed to address the culture of the schools and explore ways to change the policy and curriculum in the schools. Commissioner Grossman made a motion to explore the development of a sub-committee consisting of AHRC commissioners and School Committee members and to address enhancing the cultural competency within the APS community. Commissioner Horowitz seconded the motion, a vote was taken and passed unanimously. Commissioners DiFiglia, Horowitz, Grossman and Huvos have volunteered to be on the sub-committee.

Budget: The Commission reviewed credits and debits for the current fiscal year. Commissioner Baron made a motion to set aside up to \$1,000.00 for mediation training for one or more commissioners. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Briggett, voted on and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baron made a motion to set aside up to \$500.00 to spend on Town Day supplies. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goldsipe, voted on and passed unanimously.

Town Day Participation: Town day is set for Saturday, Sept 17, 2016. Planning for the AHRC's presence at Town Day will take place throughout the summer. A sign-up sheet for volunteers will be sent out in August.

Warrants: All AHRC-sponsored warrants passed:

1. Gender identity - protection for transgendered people. Commissioner Goldsipe reported that Nick Greenhalgh, a reporter for the Advocate, is going to write an article about this new ordinance and the process AHRC will follow when someone files a complaint.

2. Co-Chairs for AHRC will be allowed.

Vision 2020's Annual Survey: This survey showed that 60% of respondents of the annual Vision 2020 survey sent out with the annual town census don't know that AHRC exists.

Community Events/Happenings: The Commission noted these community events:

Forum On Human Trafficking – Sunday, May 22, 2 pm, Arlington Town Hall

“Being an active bystander” workshop - Wednesday, May 25, 7 to 9 pm, Arlington Center for the Arts. This event is part of True Story Theater’s Living Brochure Project. Register at <https://beinganactivebystander.eventbrite.com> so they can get an approximate headcount, though you are not required to attend after registering. Cosponsored by Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Commission on Disability, Arlington Council on Aging, Arlington Human Right Commission, Housing Corporation of Arlington, Robbins Library, and Mystic LGBTQ + Youth Support Network.

Book discussion about unconscious bias and how to overcome it, cosponsored by First Parish UU’s Diversity/Inclusion Group and Vision 2020’s Diversity Task Group - Thursday, June 2, 2016, Stanton Parlor, First Parish Unitarian Universalist, 630 Massachusetts Avenue, 7:30-9:30 pm. The book is Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People by psychologists Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald. The Book Rack bookstore is selling the book at a 30% discount.

In addition, Commissioner Goldsipe will be meeting with the Mystic LGBTQ+ Youth Support Network and True Story Theater on May 29 to help plan a collaborative event for June 24.

Commissioner Goldsipe reported that a citizen contacted the Board of Selectmen requesting that the Board of Selectmen consider changing the name of the office to something gender neutral. Commissioner Briggatt made a motion that Commissioner Goldsipe represent the AHRC at the May 23, 2016 BOS meeting should we be allowed comment on the discussion. The motion was seconded, voted on, and the motion passed with one commissioner opposing the motion.

Adjournment: 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ghanda Di Figlia